

Executive Summary

Health Care Financing Administration National Medicare Education Program Coordinating Committee Meeting Washington, DC

January 20, 1999

A meeting of the Health Care Financing Administration's National Medicare Education Program (NMEP) was held on Wednesday, January 20, 1999, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Loews L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, DC. A list of those in attendance is provided in Attachment A.

Meeting Topics and Synopsis

Welcome and Introductions - Carol Cronin and Michael Hash

Ms. Cronin opened the meeting and thanked those in attendance for their participation and asked the members to introduce themselves. She then introduced HCFA Deputy Administrator Michael Hash, and thanked participants for their efforts in support of the NMEP and encouraged their continued support of NMEP Partnership efforts.

NMEP Update - Carol Cronin

Ms. Cronin reviewed the first year of the NMEP with lessons learned and future plans for the program:

Medicare & You Handbook

- HCFA conducted a survey in December 1998 (as part of an existing survey) of 65-year-olds about whether they received the handbook. Of 600 respondents, 43 percent had not received the handbook, 40 percent had received it, and the remainder did not know. Of those who received the handbook, 30 percent read it thoroughly, 18 percent read parts of it, and 34 percent glanced through it. Seventy-five percent said it was helpful or somewhat helpful and that they kept the handbook for reference.
- There is a need to conduct increased quality assurance of mailings.
- More volatility in the plan data existed and will need to be reviewed.
- More explanation on QMB/SLMQI is needed.

Toll-Free line

- Michael McMullan will discuss later on the agenda.

Medicare Web Site

- The Internet site, **www.medicare.gov**, has been a dynamic and effective resource, with 3 million hits on the site in December, representing an increase from November.
- The Web site, **www.medicare.gov**, will continue relatively unchanged.
- A survey is being conducted on the use of the electronic handbook; 2,000 surveys have been returned.

Evaluation

- The Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Study (CAHPS) and Health Plan Employer Data Information Set (HEDIS) information will be distributed on the Medicare Web site.
- An assessment of Pilot-test State NMEP activities is being conducted in the following States: Tucson, AZ; Dayton, OH; Eugene, OR; Sarasota, FL; and Olympia, WA, with the control group in Springfield, MA.
- An evaluation is under way in Kansas City, with four control groups each receiving the bulletin, the handbook, CAHPS, and nothing.
- HCFA and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) met to determine how to present quality data; this has generated a subcommittee.
- HCFA will meet in early February with all of the Regional Offices to conduct assessments of the Special Information Campaigns; the results and feedback will be disseminated.

Preliminary plans for 1999

- To mail the handbook by October 15, 1999.
- Phase in the Toll-Free Line sooner than expected, early 1999.
- Continue updating **www.medicare.gov**.
- Messages will be of a “higher level” in 1999 and will focus more on health plan decision-making rather than on health plan choice.
- There is a need for sustained educational efforts throughout the year that will build around the November enrollment period.
- Monitor the HMO industry and choices available to beneficiaries.
- There is a need to communicate more to beneficiaries about Y2K.
- A public citizen’s advisory committee, under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, on Medicare will be established.

Telephone Customer Service Approach - Michael McMullan

Ms. McMullan explained that HCFA is reassessing its plans for the phase-in of the toll-free line (TFL), 1-800-MEDICAR(E) (1-800-633-4227). The TFL is being expanded in February to include seven additional States and the number will be available nationwide this Spring. It was also noted that:

- There have been 32,000 calls to the 1-800-MEDICAR(E) line thus far and 130,000 calls to the automated line (1-800-318-2596).
- The average call duration on 1-800-MEDICAR(E) is just over 6 minutes, and most calls have originated in Florida.
- On the automated line, which is available in 45 States overall, about 50 percent of the calls have come from California.
- The TFL will be expanded by February 15 to California, New York, Colorado, Tennessee, Connecticut, New Jersey and Minnesota. HCFA will launch advertising and promotion campaigns in those States.
- The most frequently asked questions include “What are the options available to me?”.
- HCFA would like to learn more about why callers hang up.
- About 99 percent of callers seem to be satisfied with the TFL.

The Bridge Between National and Local Partners - Lis Handley, Mike Adelberg, and Carl Hawkins

First-year assessments of the HCFA Special Information Campaigns (SIC) reports:

- 1,050 local activities were conducted, with most consisting of public presentations by partners, partnering initiatives, and targeted media events.
- SIC intervention campaign activities peaked in November and December 1998 due to nonrenewals.
- The five Pilot-test States had more SIC interventions than non-pilot States (41 versus 20).
- 93 percent of all Medicare + Choice SIC interventions were addressed to the general beneficiary audience, with 7 percent targeting special populations. Of the special populations 36 percent of SIC efforts targeted rural areas; 17 percent targeted African Americans; 13 percent targeted Asian Americans; and 11 percent targeted disabled populations.

Additional survey data concerning the beneficiaries were also presented that indicated:

- Beneficiaries have a superficial understanding of Medicare.
- Subgroups vary in their understanding of different topics.
- There is a correlation between self-reported and measured knowledge.

- Conclusions from the assessment support a segmented and targeted approach to materials distribution as a more appropriate allocation of resources.

Information was also presented on a SIC intervention being planned in Kansas City under the auspices of “Medicare Aware Day.” The event will take place in May, which is also “Older Americans Month.”

Updates on Health Employer Data Information Set (HEDIS) and Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Study (CAHPS) - Beth Kosiak

Ms. Kosiak explained that HCFA is attempting to effectively present two different comparative data measures together, HEDIS (employer-driven set of clinical performance measures for health plans) and CAHPS (beneficiary reporting of the quality of health plans). Information will be provided on the Medicare Web site. Ms. Kosiak discussed the following:

- Current challenges to effectively presenting HEDIS and CAHPS together, including high standards, time constraints, and multiple measures.
- CAHPS will report four measures: overall plan rating, overall rating of quality of care received, doctor communication, and ease of getting referrals.
- Audited HEDIS measures to be presented: clinical effectiveness, access, stability, and descriptive measures of mammography, diabetic retinal exam, beta blockers, ambulatory/preventive visit, provider turnover, and board certification.
- Results of consumer testing and focus groups of designs and definitions of presented data.
- Initial decisions about the Internet presentation.
- Future plans including further testing, expert review, feedback from users, and NMEP partners.

Lessons Learned - Group Discussion - Michael McMullan

Ms. McMullan invited feedback on the lessons learned from the past year with each of the NMEP elements, particularly activities that were effective in reaching beneficiaries. The NMEP partners noted that the following activities and communications have been useful:

- Regular e-mail to update partners on HCFA and NMEP activities.
- Conference call meetings and participation to discuss problematic issues, e.g., the nonrenewal situation.
- Regular NMEP meetings, as well as advance notice of the meetings.
- Online communications that prompt partner feedback.
- Information exchange by partners during Coordinating Committee meetings.
- **www.medicare.gov** site is easy to use and helpful.

Partner suggestions for improvement with the NMEP overall are:

- Inclusion of churches, synagogues, and other religious organizations with the NMEP.
- Inclusion of labor unions with the NMEP.
- Increased outreach to disabled communities.
- Provide additional time at NMEP meetings for partners to report their activities and share successes and failures.
- Precede the beneficiary mailing of the *Medicare & You* handbook with a four-color, one-page sheet that provides a summary of the changes that are upcoming and could potentially include a postage-paid card that beneficiaries could return to indicate whether they want to receive the booklet.
- Network with employers to disseminate information to their retirees (e.g., perhaps through regular pension check mailings).
- Organize publicity events prior to mailings to generate awareness among beneficiaries.
- Obtain specific mailing dates/commitments from the postal service so that mailings are sent out on time.
- Supply Medicare supplemental insurance on the Medicare Web site.
- Revise the partners Web site (www.medicare.gov/nmep) to improve navigation and to download information more easily.
- Increase the advertising and promotion of the TFL so beneficiaries are aware of it as a resource.

Partner suggestions specifically on partnership activities include:

- Account representatives can provide supplemental communication in addition to e-mail notices.
- The e-mail documents sent by HCFA are too lengthy and unwieldy and perhaps should be replaced by brief news updates with bullet points.
- HCFA should ensure that all information on the partners Web site is current and correct.
- HCFA should place sample messages on the partners Web site that partners could use in their own newsletters and other communications.
- Key messages should provide beneficiaries with notice of changes to the Medicare program.
- HCFA should provide advance notice about the rollout of the TFL so that partners can help to promote the line.

Agenda Items for the Next Meeting - Carol Cronin

The next meeting of the NMEP Coordinating Committee will be on March 10, 1999.
Agenda items to be included are:

- Results of the Pilot-test States assessment
- Presentation by one of the partners
- Impact of risk adjustment on health plans
- More information on “Medicare Aware Day” in Kansas City
- Competitive pricing demonstration projects that may be piloted in Kansas City and Phoenix.

Additional topics for consideration for future meetings:

- An explanation of what to expect in October 1999, when changes in HMO participation in the Medicare program are known
- A side-by-side comparison and enrollment analysis on the impact of the nonrenewals
- Timeline of expected roll-out activities.

**National Medicare Education Program
Coordinating Committee Meeting
Loews L'Enfant Plaza Hotel
Washington, DC
January 20, 1999
Attachment A: List of Attendees**

AARP

Ms. Ava Baker
Ms. C. Anne Harvey
Mr. John Killpack

American Association of Health Plans

Ms. Candace Schaller

**American Bar Association, Commission on
Legal Problems of the Elderly**

Ms. Naomi Karp

**American Federation of Teachers
Retiree Program**

Mr. Frank Stella

American Hospital Association

Ms. Ellen Pryga

Bell Atlantic Network Services

Ms. Sheila Meehan

**CHAMPUS/TRICARE
U.S. Department of Defense**

Ms. Ernestyne Forbes

Citizen Advocacy Center

Ms. Rebecca Cohen

**Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary**

Mr. John Cutler

EDS

Mr. Jeff Broocks

Employers' Managed Health Care Association

Ms. Pam Kalen

**Georgetown University Medical Center
Institute for Health Care Research and Policy**

Donald Jones

Hewitt Associates LLC

Mr. Frank McArdle

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Mr. Jim La Rocco

International Longevity Center

Ms. Beth Stevens

**Joint Commission on Accreditation of
Health Care Organizations**

Ms. Martha Wilson

Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc.

Mr. Robert Nolan

Medicare Rights Center

Ms. Diane Archer

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging

Mr. Chauncey Ching

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Ms. Monette McKinnon

National Association of Insurance Commissioners

Ms. Marcia Marshall

National Association of State Units on Aging

Bernice Hutchinson

Kathy Konka

National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc.

Ms. Nancy Caliman

National Council of Senior Citizens

Ms. MelissAnne Gallo

Ms. Fredda Vladeck

National Council on the Aging, Inc.

Susana Perry

**National Health Insurance Information Counseling
and Assistance Steering Committee**

Ms. Sue Andersen
Ms. Janis Cheney

**National Institute on Aging
Public Information Office**

Ms. Karen Pocinki

Office of Personnel Management

Ms. Ellen Tunstall

Older Women's League

Ms. Sarah Gotbaum
Mr. Ben Peck

Public Service Enterprise Group

Ms. Kathy Kostecki

Service Employees International Union

Ms. Rosalie Whelan

Towers Perrin

Mr. Kevin McCarthy

VHA Inc.

Edward N. Goodman

Visiting Nurse Associations of America

Ms. Pamela Sawyer

Watson Wyatt Worldwide

Ms. Karen Kissam
Mr. Mark White

William M. Mercer, Inc.

Ed Susank

IQ Solutions, Inc.

Meredith Mastal
Tula Michaelides
Ileana Quintas
Sheri Singer

Aspen Systems Corporation

Meryl Bloomrosen
Leonore Burts
Janice Sawyer
Deborah Weber

Invited Guests

Louis Patalano
National Senior Citizens Law Center

Barbara Perlowski
AT&T

Aimee Schenkel
Consultants for Corporate Benefits

HCFA

Robert Adams
Mike Adelberg
Steve Aprile
Peter Ashkenaz
Elizabeth Butler
Carol Cronin
Neal Denion
Jan Drass
Lis Handley
Liz Goldstein
Carl Hawkins, Kansas City RO
Rena Judy
Eric Katz
Harriett Kelman
Tom Kickham
Beth Kosiak
Kathy Lochary
Michael McMullan
Regina McPhilips
Paul Mendelsohn
Steve Miller
Carol Sampson
Joe Slattery
Lisa Weller